

New “Text-to-911” Feature Now Available Statewide

In Delaware, **CALL 911** if you can.

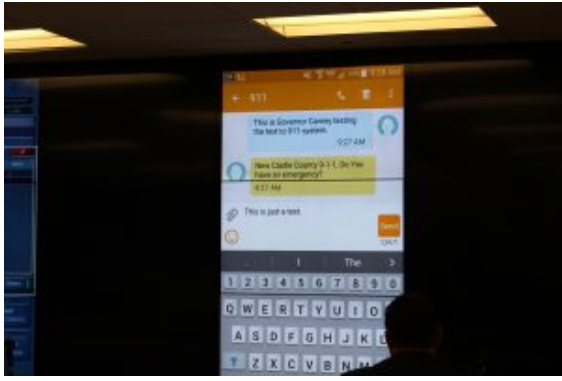
TEXT 911 IF YOU CAN'T.

Governor Carney conducted live demonstration of the system to show enhanced capabilities

NEW CASTLE, Del. – Governor John Carney on Monday recognized that Delaware’s 911 centers are now equipped to accept emergency requests for help through text message.

Today Delaware announced that all 911 centers statewide are ready to receive text messages in the time of an emergency.

“There are many emergency situations that occur each day placing our citizens in a position where making a call is not possible,” said **Governor Carney**. “Text-to-911 is a life-saving technology, giving our citizens one more way to reach out for help when they need it most. This is just another step Delaware is taking to make our communities safer.”



Governor Carney's test text message displays on monitors, highlighting the newly enhanced "text-to-911" service.



Governor Carney demonstrates "Text-to-911" with Jeffrey Miller, Chief of Emergency Communications for New Castle County.

While "Text-to-911" is now available, voice calls to 911 are still the best and fastest way to contact 911 in the event of an emergency.

"Text-to-911" is meant for times when a call to 911 is not possible due to the caller being incapable of speech during an emergency, if the caller is hard of hearing, or if the caller is in a situation where it is not safe to place a voice call.

Recent upgrades to equipment and operating system software in 911 Centers statewide, funded through the State's E911 Board provided the technology needed to support text messaging. This project transitioned the State's 911 emergency communications system which operated on copper lines to an internet based system with more flexibility for communication and interoperability.

"As chair of the State's E911 Board, I am extremely proud of this project as the system permits our 911 Centers to accept texting today and in the future will enable us to accept other types of electronic data including pictures and video," said **Safety and Homeland Security Secretary Robert Coupe**. "This project also provides new technology that significantly improves operations for our 911 Centers making emergency communication more reliable and efficient for our citizens and the public safety community."

In Delaware, **CALL 911** if you can.

TEXT 911 IF YOU CAN'T.

WHAT IS "TEXT-TO-9-1-1"?

Text-to-9-1-1 is the ability to send a text message to 911 from your mobile phone or handheld device. Messages are routed to the appropriate Delaware 911 center, in a designated queue.

- Text-to-9-1-1 is not available everywhere, and it's not always available when roaming.
- You must subscribe to your wireless carrier's text or data plan in order to make or receive text messages. Standard text messaging rates apply.
- If Text-to-9-1-1 is not available in your area, or is temporarily unavailable, you should receive a message indicating this, plus instructions on how to contact 911 by other means.
- If you do not receive a text response from 911, try to contact 911 another way.

WHO SHOULD TEXT 911?

Text-to-9-1-1 is intended for use in three emergency scenarios:

- For an individual who is deaf, hard of hearing, or has a speech disability.
- For someone who is in a situation where it is not safe to place a voice call to 911.
- A medical emergency that renders the person incapable of speech.

WARNING TO PRANK TEXTERS: Text-to-9-1-1 is for use in an emergency only. Prank texters can be identified and prosecuted according to local laws and regulations.

NOTE TO CALLERS: The preferred language for texting to 911 is English.

VOICE CALLS TO 911 ARE STILL THE BEST AND FASTEST WAY TO CONTACT 911.

HOW DO I TEXT 911?

- Enter the numbers "911" in the "To" or "Recipient" field. The first text to 911 should be short; include the location of the emergency; and ask for police, fire, or ambulance.
- Answer questions and follow instructions from the 911 call taker.
- Text in simple words — no abbreviations, emojis or slang.
- Keep all text messages short.
- **DO NOT TEXT AND DRIVE.**

WHY IS CALLING 911 STILL THE BEST OPTION?

- Voice calls are real-time communication, and Text-to-9-1-1 is not. As with all text messages, messages to 911 may take longer to receive, may get out of order, or may not be received at all.
- Photos and videos cannot be sent to 911 at this time.
- Text-to-9-1-1 cannot include more than one person. If you include anyone else on your text, it may not be received.
- Text GPS location information is not equal to current wireless-location technology.



Click image to enlarge.

To quickly get help through Text-to-911, the first text should be short and include the location of the emergency and ask for police, fire, or ambulance. Texts should be in simple words with no emojis, abbreviations or slang. Texts should also not be included on a group conversation.

"The 911 system has been a literal lifesaver for millions of Americans over the years, and since its introduction in the 1960s, 911 has had to adapt to all sorts of changes in technology, public safety needs, and user habits," said **Sussex County Council President Michael H. Vincent**, a longtime volunteer firefighter and member of the State's E911 board. "There was a time when most calls came from landlines at physical addresses. That's not true today with everyone carrying a cell phone. So by offering the 'text-to-911' feature, Sussex County and Delaware's 9-1-1 call centers are

once again adapting to change, and will now have the latest technology in place to continue providing the critical service our public expects. If one person uses this features and it saves a life, then it proves its worth.”

“Text-to-911 is a critical lifeline for those experiencing domestic violence and for other victims of crimes to reach out for immediate help when making a phone call is simply too dangerous. Those who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability now have a powerful tool to connect with first responders,” said **New Castle County Executive Matt Meyer**. “We should all be proud that our public safety leadership across the county and state are embracing wireless technology to provide a more efficient response. Call 911 when you can. Text 911 when you can’t.”

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